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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5800
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 001538

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [OVIP](#) [AF](#) [ECON](#)
SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER MEETS KAZAKH FOREIGN
MINISTER IN KABUL

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Classified By: AMBASSADOR RONALD E. NEUMANN, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)
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1.(SBU) SUMMARY: A/S Boucher discussed his upcoming visit to Kazakhstan and Central Asia with Kazakh Foreign Minister Kassymzhomart Tokaev April 2 on the margins of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Conference. They discussed Kazakhstan's regional role, and the importance of integrating Afghanistan into greater Central Asia. Key topics included regional trade and energy links, relations with key neighbors including China and India. A/S Boucher said the creation of the Bureau of South and Central Asia would allow greater U.S. focus on Central Asia, and that he would work to improve regional ties. He also told Tokaev the U.S. does not want Central Asia stuck between the regional powers and believes it is healthy for Central Asia to have relations with many partners. END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

12. (C) Foreign Minister Tokaev agreed integrating Afghanistan into Central Asia was important for Kazakhstan. He said that Afghanistan had previously been seen as a barrier, but Central Asian leaders and businessmen should look at Afghanistan with new eyes. Tokaev agreed exporting oil and gas to India and Pakistan through Afghanistan may be a real possibility.

China

13. (C) Tokaev acknowledged that China was active in Central Asia. A crude oil pipeline already connects Kazakhstan and

China, and a gas pipeline is being built. Kazakhstan is somewhat concerned with illegal immigration from China and Chinese control of the local goods market. A/S Boucher said he would be discussing Central Asia with the Chinese during his upcoming trip to Beijing.

India -----

¶4. (C) Tokaev recently visited Bangalore and was taken with India's impressive high tech sector and exports of USD 12 billion without domestic sources of oil. He said that many Indian companies are involved in the development of a high tech zone outside of Almaty. He said that India was a unique case, with its English speaking population, English traditions and democratic government that would be hard to follow. He then said Kazakhstan is moving slowly towards a democratic future and a better legal system. A/S Boucher responded that it wasn't English that made India successful, but the fact that its government and people got the big picture right: democracy, freedom of the press and a good legal system. He said that India's main problem was its bureaucracy's unwillingness to adjust to business needs, unlike China's. He predicted though, that India would adapt and could have greater potential than China in the long run.

Energy links -----

¶5. (C) A/S Boucher told Tokaev the two Trans-Caspian pipeline projects were important to the U.S. Tokaev replied that Kazakhstan is still committed to alternative pipelines. He noted the strategic importance of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), but the routing is still being negotiated. President Nazarbaev has publicly expressed approval of the Trans-Caspian project. Tokaev added that developing two

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routes in very important. A/S Boucher agreed that the region needed options, and that depending on a strategic and economic competitor to transport fuel exports should not be Kazakhstan's only option.

Trade/Infrastructure Links -----

¶6. (C) A/S Boucher said he wanted to talk about connecting the missing pieces in regional transport links between Central Asia and the Indian Ocean when he gets to Kazakhstan. He wanted to discuss the links that need to be made to make the transit route a reality. Tokaev said a stable Afghanistan would improve opportunities, and that Kazakhstan sought greater trade links with its neighbors. Tokaev strongly urged A/S Boucher to meet with the Kazakh Minister of Transportation who has just delivered the national transit strategy to the government.

TIFA Agreement -----

¶7. (C) A/S Boucher told Tokaev that the U.S. is interested in moving a TIFA agreement forward, hopefully some time this summer. He said he would like to find items both sides could agree on, such as regional linkages, energy opportunities, democracy and economic arrangements such as the WTO. Tokaev said the Vice President's upcoming visit would be a good time to discuss these issues.

Comment -----

¶8. (C) The cordial meeting between A/S Boucher and Foreign Minister Tokaev provided useful input in preparation for A/S Boucher's upcoming trip to Kazakhstan. A/S Boucher expressed interest in finding topics both sides could agree on, and meeting with the Kazakh Transportation Minister to discuss

transit links. Tokaev seemed to accept the importance the U.S. places on improving transit and energy links between the Central Asian Republics and their neighbors, including roads through Afghanistan to Pakistan and India, and the Trans-Caspian Pipeline.

19. A/S Boucher did not have a chance to review this cable prior to departure.

Neumann